



## EARLY IDENTIFICATION = EARLY HELP

Children grow and develop at their own rates. Most of the time, differences between children of the same age are nothing to worry about. Sometimes, however, differences can be a sign of learning or developmental problems.

If you are concerned about your child's **speech, academics, understanding, coordination, vision, hearing or social skills**, it is important to get answers. You can request a free evaluation from the school district where you live. Evaluations are the first step in identifying disabilities.

Children experience great brain growth between the ages of 3 and 5. Extra help during this window can improve your child's ability to learn. The earlier a problem is identified, the better the chances that special services can help your child reach his or her full potential.

## WHO CAN REQUEST AN EVALUATION?

- A parent or guardian
- A teacher or school staff member
- Head Start or other educational, community or state agency

*Parent permission is always needed before an evaluation can take place.*



**More detailed information** can be found in Illinois State Board of Education publications including:

Educational Rights and Responsibilities:  
Understanding Special Education in Illinois  
[http://www.isbe.state.il.us/spec-ed/html/parent\\_rights.htm](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/spec-ed/html/parent_rights.htm)

14-day Memo-Preschool Initial Eligibility  
Guidance [http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/pdf/preschool\\_sped\\_3-5\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/pdf/preschool_sped_3-5_guidance.pdf)

## ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT OR SPEECH?



## REQUEST A FREE EVALUATION FOR YOUR CHILD, AGE 3 TO 5

**Governor's Office**  
OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

**Governor Pat Quinn**



## EVALUATIONS ARE FREE

School districts offer free screenings to identify children at risk for developmental or learning problems who need a full evaluation. Full evaluations may be given to children who are 3- to 5-years-old, and to 2-year-olds who will turn 3 during the school year. **You can request an evaluation for your child at any time.**

## EVALUATIONS HELP CHILDREN GET THE SERVICES THEY NEED

When an evaluation is completed and an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team determines that a child is eligible for special education services, the local school district is required to provide free and appropriate services to the child. For example, a child with speech impairment could receive speech services with individualized educational goals for the speech and language impairment.

## IT'S EASY TO REQUEST AN EVALUATION

Start by writing to your local public school. Your letter can be long or short. **Explain your concerns and ask for a full evaluation.** Include any reports or letters from your child's doctor, preschool teacher or others. Keep a copy of your letter.

Your request starts a timeline. The school district has **14 school days** to decide if an evaluation is needed, and to notify you in writing.



## THE SCHOOL WILL CONSIDER:

- *Information from you about your child's development, educational progress and suspected problem*
- *Information from teachers, doctors or other professionals*
- *Screening results*
- *Hearing and vision tests*
- *School attendance records and other relevant information*

If the school decides an evaluation is needed, it must get your written permission. After you give written permission, the school has **60 school days** to evaluate your child.

If the school decides that an evaluation is not needed, you must be told the reasons in writing. You also will receive information about how to appeal if you disagree.

## BE AN ACTIVE PARTNER IN YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION

**You are the expert on your child.** Share your observations and concerns with the school. If an evaluation shows learning or developmental problems, you will be an important member of the IEP team that decides what special services your child will receive.

An early childhood evaluation is often the family's first contact with the school and special education services. Many words and procedures may be new to you. **Ask questions** so that you understand your child's needs and the services that can help.



## IT'S IMPORTANT TO:

- *Ask questions and share information*
- *Be aware of school responsibilities and timelines*
- *Participate in meetings about your child*
- *Keep all records in a file or binder*
- *Share what works at home and in the community*
- *Learn new strategies to help your child*